James C. Ely earns MMR 308

Jim Ely has always been interested in building models. He has built airplanes, trucks and, of course, trains. One Christmas, his parents purchased for his brother and him a used Ives train set consisting of a passenger train and a freight train complete with buildings, turnouts and quite a bit of track. His father tried to use up the entire collection of track so that they would be able to see it all on Christmas morning. It covered so much of the living room floor that you could hardly walk through the living room. Jim, his brother and their friends played with the trains for hours on end while they were growing up.

Later, when Jim was going to engineering school at the University of Denver, a friend who was an electrical engineer introduced him to the O scale club that is still in the basement of the Union Station in Denver. As a result of this experience, he bought a Mantua shifter and a few pieces of track, which he laid on his apartment window sill. A little later, he purchased a Great Western brass locomotive kit, which he assembled with a great deal of effort using the primitive soldering iron available in the early 1950s.

In 1977, Jim joined the South Suburban Model Railroad Club because it had a modular division. The first time they set up their modules for the public was in a shopping mall at Christmas in 1978. This experience involved him over the years in many aspects of model railroading which he has ardently pursued.

Shortly after joining the South Suburban Club he became a member of the Denver HO club at the Colorado Railroad Museum. It was these two fine clubs that inspired Jim to work on his structures for a merit award. From there he just kept working in areas that interested him at the moment until he had accumulated a number of merit awards.

This experience has given him a better appreciation of the time and effort expended when he looks at someone else's effort to portray the prototype.

Jim has earned Certificates of Achievement in Master Builder Cars, Master Builder Structures, Master Builder Scenery, Model Railroad Engineer Civil, Model Railroad Engineer Electrical, Chief Dispatcher and Association Volunteer.